

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

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NODIS

FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY EDMONDSON ONLY

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM PRETORIA DATED JANUARY 4, 1977
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T PRETORIA 0032

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SCHAUFLE FROM EDMONDSON

DEPT PLEASE PASS CONFIRMATION COPY TO EDMONDSON IN GABORONE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH SF

SUBJ: RICHARD SEES VORSTER ON RHODESIA

1. SUMMARY: VORSTER RECEIVED RICHARD GRACIOUSLY JANUARY 3
AND LISTENED CAREFULLY TO HIS PROPOSALS. ALTHOUGH HE MADE
REPEATED REFERENCES TO THE DIFFICULTY HE AND SMITH WOULD HAVE
IN EXPLAINING ANY DEVIATION FROM THE FIRM AGREEMENT THAT WAS
REACHED ON THE FIVE POINTS--WHICH HE CLAIMED HE AND SMITH

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HAD BEEN ASSURED WERE AGREED TO BY THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS--
VORSTER SAID THAT HE WOULD "STRONGLY CONSIDER" RECOMMENDING
THE NEW BRITISH PROPOSALS TO SMITH IF, REPEAT IF, "BANKABLE
ASSURANCES" COULD BE OBTAINED THAT GUERRILLA WARFARE WOULD
CEASE UPON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGREED INTERIM GOVERNMENT.
(HE ASKS A GUARANTEE, IN EFFECT, THAT POINT 5 OF THE FIVE
POINTS WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED.) RICHARD WILL SEEK SUCH

ASSURANCES FROM THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS AND RETURN TO SEE VORSTER IN ABOUT TEN DAYS, BEFORE HE SEES SMITH AGAIN. HE SAYS HE MAY ASK OUR HELP IN APPROACHING THE AFRICAN STATES. END SUMMARY.

2. IVOR RICHARD, ACCOMPANIED BY DENNIS GRENNAN, PHILIP MANSFIELD, SIR DAVID SCOTT, AND A NOTE TAKER, SPENT NEARLY THREE HOURS ON JANUARY 3 WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, FOREIGN MINISTER MULLER, BRAND FOURIE, AND AMBASSADOR PIK BOTHA. RICHARD WAS VERY PLEASED WITH THE SESSION, CALLED IT A POSITIVE DAY, AND SAID VORSTER WAS FRIENDLY AND GRACIOUS THROUGHOUT--ALTHOUGH HE KEPT REFERRING TO THE FIRM AGREEMENT THAT HAD BEEN REACHED IN PRETORIA AND TO THE UNRELIABILITY OF THE WEST AS INDICATED BY THEIR VOTE ON THE LESOTHO RESOLUTION AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

3. RICHARD DESCRIBED THE BRITISH PROPOSALS TO VORSTER AND GAVE HIM A REVIEW OF THE TALKS WITH SMITH, NOTING SMITH'S STRONG DISTRUST OF THE BRITISH AND HIS INITIAL REJECTION OF A BRITISH ROLE IN ANY INTERIM GOVERNMENT. VORSTER RESPONDED THAT A FIRM AGREEMENT HAD BEEN ENTERED INTO AT PRETORIA AND THAT HE AND SMITH HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT THE FIVE POINTS HAD BEEN AGREED TO BY THE AFRICAN PRESIDENTS, THAT SMITH HAD WORKED IN GOOD FAITH TO OBTAIN HIS PARTY'S AGREEMENT, AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE EASY TO GO BACK NOW AND EXPLAIN WHY THE AGREEMENT WAS NOT KEPT. VORSTER SAID SMITH WOULD HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY CONVINCING HIS PEOPLE THAT THEY SHOULD ACCEPT A NEW PLAN THAT WOULD MAKE THEM DEPENDENT ON A BRITISH RESIDENT COMMISSIONER. VORSTER MAINTAINED THAT HE WOULD HAVE
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SIMILAR PROBLEM WITH HIS OWN SUPPORTERS SHOULD HE ADVOCATE A NEW APPROACH. WHEN RICHARD MENTIONED AFRICAN DISTRUST OF SMITH AND DOUBTS ABOUT HIS SINCERITY IN ACCEPTING MAJORITY RULE, VORSTER REPLIED THAT HE HAD ASSURED SECRETARY KISSINGER THAT HE WOULD SEE TO IT THAT SMITH KEPT HIS PART OF THE AGREEMENT IF OTHERS KEPT THEIRS.

4. RICHARD ARGUED THAT ACCEPTANCE OF A BRITISH RESIDENT COMMISSIONER WOULD SURELY BE BETTER THAN THE CONTINUATION AND INTENSIFICATION OF GUERRILLA WARFARE. VORSTER WAS AT FIRST INCLINED TO DISAGREE AND CITED THE VOTE ON THE LESOTHO RESOLUTION AGAIN AS "THE LAST STRAW" IN THE MATTER OF WESTERN RELIABILITY. (WHEN PRESSED, HOWEVER, HE DID ADMIT GRATITUDE FOR PAST VOTES IN WHICH SOUTH AFRICA WAS SUPPORTED BY WESTERN VETOES.) AS DISCUSSION PROGRESSED, VORSTER AGREED THAT STOPPING THE WAR WAS IMPORTANT. THEN RICHARD ASKED WHETHER VORSTER WOULD BE WILLING TO RECOMMEND THE BRITISH PROPOSALS TO SMITH IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN "BANKABLE ASSURANCES" FROM THE NATIONALISTS AND FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS THAT THE WAR

WOULD CEASE UPON THE INSTALLATION OF AN AGREED INTERIM GOVERNMENT AS OUTLINED IN THE BRITISH PROPOSALS. (RICHARD CONFESSED HE WAS NOT SURE HIMSELF WHAT "BANKABLE ASSURANCES" MEANT.) VORSTER REPLIED THAT HE WOULD CERTAINLY GIVE IT "STRONG CONSIDERATION" IF SUCH ASSURANCES COULD BE OBTAINED. A WINK FROM PIK BOTHA AT THIS POINT WAS TAKEN BY RICHARD TO MEAN THAT HE HAD MADE AN EFFECTIVE POINT WITH VORSTER. IF VORSTER CAN JUSTIFY A CHANGE IN POSITION BY SHOWING HIS CONSTITUENTS THAT HERE IS SOMETHING TO BE GAINED BY COMPROMISING ON ANNEX C, THERE IS A CHANCE THAT HE WOULD INDEED BE WILLING TO RECOMMEND IT TO SMITH.

5. THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING (OR GIVING) ASSURANCES ON THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS WAS ALSO MENTIONED BUT WAS APPARENTLY NOT GIVEN AS MUCH IMPORTANCE BY VORSTER AS THE CESSATION OF GUERRILLA WARFARE.

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6. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF THE BLOCKING MECHANISM IN THE BRITISH PROPOSALS. VORSTER WAS NOT IMPRESSED WITH THE IDEA OF A BLOCKING THIRD AND WONDERED WHY THERE COULD NOT BE PARITY IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, NOTING THAT A SINGLE VOTE COULD HAVE THE SAME EFFECT EITHER WAY. ALTHOUGH FOURIE WAS INCLINED TO PRESS THE PARITY IDEA, VORSTER APPARENTLY DID NOT, AND RICHARD CONCLUDED THAT THE STRUCTURAL PROPOSALS WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE AN INSUPERABLE PROBLEM IF SUFFICIENTLY STRONG ASSURANCES COULD OBTAINED THAT THE WAR WOULD CEASE UPON INSTALLATION OF WHATEVER FORM OF INTERIM GOVERNMENT WAS AGREED UPON.

7. VORSTER ASKED WHEN RICHARD WOULD RETURN, INDICATING THAT HE VERY MUCH WANTED TO SEE HIM AGAIN AND WOULD MAKE HIMSELF AVAILABLE IN CAPE TOWN WHENEVER RICHARD COULD GET BACK.

RICHARD SAID HE WOULD PLAN TO RETURN AND BE IN CAPE TOWN IN ABOUT TEN DAYS.

8. RICHARD GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER HIS LATE AFTERNOON RETURN TO PRETORIA JANUARY 3. BRITISH, WHO DESCRIBED IT AS ESSENTIALLY A STONEWALLING EFFORT, PROMISED TO SUPPLY EMBASSY PRETORIA WITH TRANSCRIPT OR NOTES EARLY JANUARY 4. RICHARD WANTED ME TO KNOW THAT WHEN VOA CORRESPONDENT ASKED WHETHER HE WAS "CONSULTING" ME REGULARLY HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT "CONSULTING" BUT SIMPLY KEEPING ME INFORMED ABOUT HIS TALKS AS TRIP PROGRESSED. (SA PRESS EARLIER CARRIED ERRONEOUS STORY THAT I WAS ACCOMPANYING RICHARD AND WOULD SIT IN ON MEETING WITH VORSTER.) ALSO, WHEN PRESSED ABOUT

WHETHER TIMING OF RETURN VISIT TO SA MIGHT CAUSE DELAY IN RECONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE, RICHARD SAID HE COULD EXTEND ADJOURNMENT A BIT BUT HAD NO PLANS TO DO SO.

9. RICHARD LEAVES 1100 JANUARY 4 FOR BOTSWANA TO SEEK
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ADVICE FROM FOREIGN MINISTER MOGWE JANUARY 4 AND PRESIDENT KHAMA EARLY JANUARY 5 ABOUT HOW TO APPROACH OTHER AFRICAN PRESIDENTS TO GET ASSURANCES ON ENDING GUERRILLA WAR AND EXPLORE IDEAS OF INTERIM GOVERNMENT. HE WILL FLY TO MAPUTO JANUARY 5 FOR APPOINTMENT WITH MACHEL AT 0830 JANUARY 6 AND FLY TO DAR ES SALAAM JANUARY 6 TO SEE NYERERE BEFORE LATTER LEAVES FOR FRONTLINE SUMMIT IN LUSAKA. RICHARD NOW PLANS TO SEE VORSTER AGAIN BEFORE SEEING SMITH A SECOND TIME.

10. AMBASSADOR BOWDLER HAS LEARNED FROM LOCAL SOURCE THAT BRAND FOURIE CALLED HAROLD HAWKINS TO BRIEF HIM ON RICHARD-VORSTER TALKS, ASSURING HAWKINS THAT NO COMMITMENTS WERE MADE AND THAT CERTAIN ADDITIONAL ASSURANCES WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE ANY DEVIATION FROM ANNEX C COULD BE CONSIDERED. FOURIE AND HAWKINS PLAN TO MEET IN CAPE TOWN ON JANUARY 10.

11. COMMENT. RICHARD OBVIOUSLY BELIEVES THERE ARE NEGOTIATING POSSIBILITIES IN THE INTEREST THAT BOTH SMITH AND VORSTER HAVE IN ENDING THE GUERRILLA WAR, I.E., IN ASSURING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIFTH OF THE FIVE POINTS. HE INTENDS SEEKING AFRICAN ASSURANCES THAT WILL PERMIT HIM TO GET VORSTER ON BOARD" BEFORE HE RETURNS TO SEE SMITH. IN THIS CONNECTION, RICHARD'S PARTING WORD TO ME ON JANUARY 3 WAS THAT HE MIGHT HAVE TO TURN TO THE U.S. FOR HELP IN ASKING FOR SUCH ASSURANCES FROM THE AFRICAN STATES. I MADE NO COMMENT. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO ANY SUCH REQUEST WOULD BE APPRECIATED. BOWDLER UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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